

The Athenian Mercury.

Tuesday, February 5. 1695.

Quest. 1. **I** doubt not but you are acquainted that the princes of the house of Newbourg were formerly Protestants, and that a Jesuit found the means to make them turn Papists, who afterwards himself embraced the Protestant Religion: But to me it seems strange, and therefore I desire to know from what principles these contrary effects cou'd proceed?

Ans'w. There's no great miracle in either; it not being difficult for us to conceive that a man who studied controversy, and examined the grounds of both Religions shou'd change his opinion in favour of the Protestants, or that prince shou'd through interest of State, pass from the Protestant to the Catholick faith.

Quest. 2. Being ambitious of an universal knowledge (so far as my mean capacity may be enabled to attain it) I did lately make my applications to, and was very Importunate with a Learn'd acquaintance of mine for his instructions therein. But he (through too much modesty) declining it, advis'd my addresses unto you, which occasions you this trouble. And that you may the more freely comply with my desires, I think it not amiss to acquaint you, that I'm by Profession a Lawyer, in the studies of which Science, I've made a little progress, and have also some knowledge in the Vulgar Tongues. I know, Gent. that the Law is an intricate and very laborious study, and (as an Author therein long since observ'd) requires the Wise man: And that as Plants, annually transplanted, produce no Fruit; so the mind that's always hurried from its proper station will scarce ever do good in any: Yet these thoughts are insufficient to obviate those impetuous desires I ever had after the acquisition of an universal knowledge, or at least a superficial inspection into all Sciences necessary for the accomplishment of a Gent. But I'm wholly at a loss with what Science (besides that of my Profession) to begin, as also what authors therein to peruse, whether the more ancient or modern, &c. And in truth I must confess my ignorance in every thing relating to a methodical study; however I've a willing mind ready both to receive and follow your directions, which I do hereby request.

Ans'w. Read some of our former Mercuries, and you'll see as full an account of our Judgments in this case, as we can give you, both in respect to a method for the Sciences, and what books we think best on each particular one.

Quest. 3. What course shall I take with one that has not only called me Rogue, but says he will prove me so? he being very poor and having a wife and six children, my conscience will not permit me to put him in Prison, nor can I bear to lose my good name by his means.

Ans'w. Since 'tis impossible to inflict any punishment upon him without making so many innocent persons suffer by it, you ought to have the more patience with him, and if 'tis like to be of little or no consequence, not to regard it: but if 'twill prove very prejudicial to you, we think you may lawfully secure your self, by first trying if you cannot make him publickly recant what he has said; which if he refuses, whatever misfortune accidentally happens to his family through your justifying your self, he only is the sole cause, and you no way guilty of it.

Quest. 4. You have been often desired, and are again entreated to give some account of the original of Samaria, from whence it had its name, where abouts it was situated;

by whom the temple was built at Gerizim; who destroy'd it, and what were the several changes, which happen'd to this Province in respect to its inhabitants and Governors? And if the Samaritans are not deceived, in saying they have always dwelt near Gerizim?

Ans'w. This Country lay between *Judea* properly so call'd, and *Galilee*. The mountain upon which it was built belong'd to a certain man call'd *Sheemer*, of whom *Omri* King of *Israel* bought it, and thereupon this *City* was call'd *Samaria*, Kings 16. 24. Some of the antients, who did not remember this passage, have believed that this word came from *Shamar*, to keep, because the King of *Affyria* who had led the inhabitants of that Country away Captive, sent new colonies thither to keep it. And the Modern *Samaritans* also who rejected the Histories of the *Jews*, maintain that they had their name from that *Hebrew* word [to keep;] because, they say, they faithfully kept the *Law* of *Moses*; but 'tis no uncommon thing to see Histories maintain'd from pretended *Etymologies*, since we have instances enough of it both from the *Greeks* and *Latins*; one of which we have from the *Romans*, who said, that *Latium* had its name from *Latere* to hide, upon which they have invented that Circumstance in the fable of *Saturn*, of hiding himself in *Italy* that he might not be taken by his son.

This town was the Capital of the ten tribes, until it was taken by *Salmaneser* after a siege of three years, when 'tis probable 'twas entirely razed, from *Micah* 1. 6. altho the sacred History says nothing of it. And 'tis very likely 'twas again rebuilt by the *Cuthites* who erected a Temple at *Gerizim*, which was thrown down by *Hyrcanus* an hundred and eight years before our Saviour's time. *Josephus* tells us that this prince so utterly destroy'd both *Temple* and *City*, that there remain'd no marks that there had ever been any Town standing there. A long time after which, *Gabinius* Governor of *Syria* reestablished it, perhaps to keep *Judea* in awe, and gave it the name of *Gabinia*, which it kept till *Herod*'s time, who having imbellish'd it, call'd it *Sebastia* in honour of *Augustus*. Yet for all this, a Neighbouring Town call'd *Neapolis*, and at this time, *Napalouse*, was afterwards more Celebrated, and pass'd for the Capital of *Samaria*. And some modern Authors have confounded *Sebastia* and *Napalouse*, but *Cellarius* shows their mistake, by proving that this last *City* is the same with the antient *Shechem*, situated at the foot of Mount *Gerizim*; mention'd in *Judges*, 9. 7 verse. After the King of *Syria* had subdued *Samaria*, he sent men to inhabit there from *Babylon*, from *Cuth*, *Ava*, *Hamath*, and *Sepharvaim*: We have no very good account whereabouts these four last places were, but 'tis very probable the *Cuthites* were either best known or most numerous, because the *Jews* have since call'd the *Samaritans* by that name. *Josephus* and some authors after him have affirm'd that *Cuth* was in *Persia*, and *Huet* says, that one part of *Susian* which the *Greeks* named *Cissia* was so call'd: But *Scaliger* thought the *Cuthites* were a people of *Colchide*, because there was a Town call'd *Curus*, the inhabitants whereof had received Circumcision, which custom he believed was introduced by some of the *Israelites* being carryed thither; altho this opinion is contrary to what has been received from antiquity. The Scripture says absolutely that the *Israelites* were led Captive into *Affyria*, and *Media*. And altho the chief habitation of the *Samaritans* is at *Napalouse*, yet some modern Relations assure us that there are some of 'em at *Grand Cair*, *Gaza*, and other places. They are very ignorant of their

own antiquity, because they will not receive any account from the Jews, and have none that is particular to themselves, that is any thing exact. They believe themselves all descended from the Tribes of *Esdras*, *Manasseh*, and *Levi*. They were first submitted to the *Assyrians*, then to the *Babylonians*, and afterwards to the *Persians*; who sent them Governors, the last of which was *Sanballat*, who obtain'd a permission of *Darius* to build a Temple upon the Mount of *Cerizim* in favour of his Son in Law *Menasseh* brother to *Jaddus* the high Priest of the *Jews*, and after *Darius* was overcome by *Alexander* he paid homage to the last, and affliffed him with Soldiers at the siege of *Tye*. But he dying was succeeded by *Andromachus*, whom according to *Quintus Curtius* the *Samaritans* burnt alive being enraged by his great severity towards them. *Josephus*, who omitted nothing that could aid to the Glory of his Nation, says, that *Alexander* would not grant the *Samaritans* that Exemption of the 7th year's Tribute, as he did to the *Jews*. The same Historian likewise faith, that they had a dispute with the *Jews* before *Herod*; the last affirming, according to the Principles of the *Mosaic Law*, that the true Temple of the God of *Israell*, was that at *Jerusalem*; and the *Samaritans* pretended 'twas that at *Cerizim*: Some have believed that by the *Samaritans* he meant those who lived in *Egypt*, because the inhabitants of *Napalouse* had been subjects to the Kings of *Syria* from the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and had had their Governors from thence; He assuring us that they offer'd to *Antiochus* to have their Temple call'd the *Temple of the Jupiter of the Greeks*. But however, it was *Hyrcanus* subdued them, after which *Gabinius*, having built their *City*, and *Herod* beautified it, as we have before observed, his Son *Archelaus* by his right inherited the Province of *Samaria*, with some others which he possest himself of, by the consent of *Augustus*, on condition he should renit to the *Samaritans* one 4th part of their Tribute; because when all *Judea* was up in Rebellion, they alone were peaceable, and did not take *Arias*. But *Archelaus* being banished, they sent them an Intendant from *Rome*: sometime after which *Agrippa* obtaining the Title of King, possest *Samaria*; and to succeed him the *Samaritans* had again *New Roman* Intendants. From *Vespasian's* time, that Countrey had the same fate with the rest of *Judea*; although *Josephus* says nothing of it, but that *Titus* pass'd with his Army through *Napalouse*. Under *Adebar*, who put so great a Number of the *Jews* to Death, nothing happen'd extraordinary to the *Samaritans*; we don't so much as find them mentioned in the History of that time, except in a Letter of *Abrian* to the Consul *Servianus*, where he says, That all the Religions of *Egypt* adored *Scarus*, without excepting the *Jews*, *Samaritans* and *Christians*. The *Samaritans* of *Napalouse* having a long time resisted *Severus*, he at last took from them all their former Privileges, but soon after permitted them to enjoy them again. In the succeeding ages it appears that the *Samaritans* did not only dwell in *Judea* and the Neighbouring provinces, but that some of 'em were at *Constantinople* and some at *Rome*. 'Tis plain from *Cassiodorus* that they had a *Synagogue* at *Rome* from the time of *Theodosie*, since he tells us, they redemanded an house which was fallen into the hands of the *Ecclesiastics*, because it was formerly given to them for a *Synagogue*. Some Authors expressly tell us they rebelled in *Justinian's* time and ill treated the Christians in the province of *Samaria*, for which reason all of 'em were banish'd out of *Judea*, except those who became Christians. And these seditions were the only reason why they were used so severely. Thus, when we consult so many *Authentic* authors, the ignorance of the present *Samaritans* plainly appears, who affirm they have continued near the Mount of *Cerizim*, ever since *Moses* brought them out of *Egypt*.

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